

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

17 October 1962

**MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY DIRECTOR (RESEARCH), CIA**

**SUBJECT: Management of Fire Fly Drone Operation over Cuba**

I refer to memorandum [ ] for the Director, National Reconnaissance Office from the Assistant Director (Special Activities) on the above subject, dated 5 October 1962. This memorandum discusses pros and cons concerning assignment of operational responsibility for the employment of this drone (over Cuba) to the CIA or to the Department of Defense. As the memorandum noted in paragraph C.1, the essential problem in deciding how this should be managed concerns the political and national policy considerations implicit in the alternate possibilities. In regard to present operations against Cuba, certain questions raised by this memorandum have been clearly decided at the highest level during events of the last several days. In view of the rationale which led to this decision, it would appear that we should also plan for the Fire Fly vehicles to be employed against Cuba under the operational responsibility of the Department of Defense.

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Accordingly, I propose that we proceed on the assumption that the Department of Defense will manage and operate all Fire Fly drones against Cuba under the NRO supervision and with CIA assistance in ELINT, contracting, and security. Should future circumstances warrant, the NRO can, of course, switch the method of operation to fit the altered circumstances.

I am designating [ ] of the NRO staff as the over-all NRO project manager for this effort. He will work directly with personnel of the CIA, the Air Force, the Navy, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff as necessary so that all tasks are clearly assigned and fully coordinated to assure a successful operation at the earliest date.

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cc: Office of Special Activities  
AFOOP([ ]) 25X1A  
Director, Joint Recon  
Center (JCS)  
AFCIG-5  
Dir., Naval Intelligence  
(Rear Adm Lowrance)  
Director, NSA

Joseph V. Charyk  
Director  
(S) National Reconnaissance Office

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NRO review(s)  
completed.

**TOP SECRET**